



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Edinburgh Research Explorer

### **Alienation and community in contemporary Scottish fiction**

**Citation for published version:**

Thomson, A 2016, Alienation and community in contemporary Scottish fiction: The case of Janice Galloway's 'The trick is to keep breathing'. in S Lyall (ed.), *Community in Modern Scottish Literature*. Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, vol. 25, Brill, Leiden, pp. 160-178.  
[https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004317451\\_010](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004317451_010)

**Digital Object Identifier (DOI):**

[10.1163/9789004317451\\_010](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004317451_010)

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Peer reviewed version

**Published In:**

Community in Modern Scottish Literature

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Chapter

**Alienation and Community in Contemporary Scottish Fiction:**  
**The Case of Janice Galloway's *The Trick is to Keep Breathing***

Alex Thomson

*Abstract*

The refusal of innovative Scottish fiction published in the 1980s and 1990s to appeal to community as a solution to social alienation has led to it being accused of nihilism. This chapter explores this stylistic ambivalence through a case study of Janice Galloway's *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*.

*Keywords*

Alienation, contemporary Scottish fiction, community, critique, Janice Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, William McIlvanney, *The Kiln*

While commentators have agreed that the 1980s and 1990s saw the development of distinctive new styles of fiction in Scotland, the nature and consequences of those developments remain disputed. For James English, the 'strong emergence' of Scottish fiction in the period, 'formally and linguistically as well as thematically [distinguished] from the accepted norms of the English novel', is part of a larger differentiation of British fiction 'into a whole range of commercially and symbolically important subcategories'.<sup>1</sup> Responses by Scottish critics confirm this symbolic importance: the addition of significant new novels to continuing strengths in drama and poetry has been seen as crucial to the literary revival of the period. This reflects the novel's status as the preminent modern literary form, as well as the

greater portability of fiction to international audiences. Writing in 1993, Gavin Wallace argued that:

The period since 1970 is likely to be seen with hindsight as a phase in which the Scottish novel flourished with a maturity and consistency reminiscent of the heyday of Galt, Scott and Hogg in the nineteenth century or Gibbon, Gunn, McColla [*sic*], Linklater and Mitchison in the twentieth, producing reputations of an analogous stature and influence which have extended well beyond the native.<sup>2</sup>

Yet studies of this period repeatedly identify an apparent contradiction: the formal innovation and artistic success of the Scottish novel is often paired with a strongly negative assessment of contemporary Scottish society. For Douglas Gifford, it is ‘the paradox of what looks like a revival of Scottish writing, but the theme of which is pessimism about the very events the revival describes’; a revival ‘whose subject matter is the dearth of real culture and aesthetic freedom in modern Scotland’.<sup>3</sup> Cairns Craig contrasts ‘the bleak and depressing worlds inhabited by [...] typical characters of post-devolutionary Scotland’ with their representation ‘in novelistic styles that are radically innovative and energetically ambitious’.<sup>4</sup>

For some commentators, the negativity and alienation of the new Scottish fiction is simply a reflection of social reality. Echoing James Kelman’s comment that ‘all you’ve got to do is follow some people around and look at their existence for 24 hours and it will be horror. It will just be horror’, Gavin Wallace suggests that:

A substantial majority of the most significant novels, in fact, published since the 1970s comprise a catalogue of Kelman’s ‘horror’ in its range of constituent complaints: the spiritual and material deprivations of unemployment and

decaying communities; failures to find – or accept – self-fulfilment in education, work, emotional relationships; inarticulacy and alienation escaped through alcoholism; destructive mental instability; the paralysing hyper-awareness of class and cultural differentiation; crippling incapacities to give love, or to receive it.<sup>5</sup>

Wallace's comments reflect a sense of national crisis, in which the impoverishment of some specific Scottish communities, although rooted in much longer-term economic transformations, acquired a new symbolic centrality in articulating the impact of the political and social changes of the 1980s. In William McIlvanney's *The Kiln* (1996), the novelist Tom Docherty makes a representative confession of his inability to understand Thatcherite Britain:

He couldn't believe how quickly a largely decent society had been conditioned to prey on itself. [...] One woman, with all the vision of a soldier ant, had managed to screw up the UK. Dehumanisation by statute. There is no such thing as society. A self-fulfilling idiocy.<sup>6</sup>

In both these examples, the loss of community – meaning something like the sense of common belonging that guarantees mutual co-operation – is a prior historical and social fact. Literature can either merely reflect this loss, or by giving it expression can help to combat it. This latter ambition is made explicit in *The Kiln*, in which the novelist (in this case, both McIlvanney and Docherty) re-affirms the roots of his art through its connection to the ability of the people around them to truly inhabit a social world through imagination – to 'find a sense of community in some shabby council houses and a few bleak streets'; or 'an

awareness of the horizons [Docherty's] mother can still see, no matter how enclosed her circumstances'.<sup>7</sup>

However for other critics, the literature of alienation is not a reflection of failed community but rather a challenge to the communitarian political horizons implicit in the quotations from Wallace and McIlvanney. In her study of the period, Eleanor Bell argues that 'writers have often been interested in [...] questioning limits and borders of Scottishness, which literary and cultural critics have often been hesitant to address'.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Scott Hames sees the fiction of the 1980s and 1990s as defined precisely by its rejection of what Francis Hart had argued in 1978 was the traditional 'moral primacy of community' in the Scottish novel: 'the "new renaissance" novels broach collective identity primarily to address more fundamental and intractable ethical dilemmas centred on the individual'.<sup>9</sup> This chapter will build on the work of critics such as Bell and Hames by arguing that the stylistic and critical distinction of the new Scottish fiction of alienation rests not simply on its ethical orientation towards individual rather than community, or its rejection of the Romantic model in which literature is conceived as the imaginative recreation of community, but on its specific forms of equivocation on this issue. This allows us to give shape to the essential political difference between the confidence displayed by McIlvanney's protagonist in his attribution of blame, and the specific *ambivalence* characteristic of the new style.

Rahel Jaeggi suggests that since the birth of the concept in European Romanticism, there have been two divergent currents of thinking about alienation in philosophy and social theory. Broadly speaking, one perspective is existentialist, and the other Marxist. For the latter, 'alienation is understood as alienation *from* the social world, whereas in the former case the condition of being immersed in a public world is itself regarded as the source of alienation, understood as the subject's loss of authenticity'.<sup>10</sup> One approach concludes in social critique and the subordination of individual to community: only the freedom of the

social whole will resolve the problem of individual unfreedom. The other seems to point to the rejection of social goals, including the aspiration for a critically renewed society, as an intrusion on the self. What strikes critics as the ‘paradox’ of the fiction of alienation is its refusal to clearly decide between these two positions. This refusal is striking in the context of local and international resurgence of identity politics in the 1980s and 1990s – what Arjun Appadurai describes as the global production of locality.<sup>11</sup> As Gillian Rose argued at the time, the ‘currency of “community” avoids any immediate implication of state, nation, sovereignty, representation – of power and its legitimation – yet it insinuates and ingratiates the idea of the perfectly enhanced individual and collective life’.<sup>12</sup> The renewal of identity thinking places literature under new pressure to contribute to the production of community. This runs the risk not only of relinquishing literature’s aspiration to critical distance from social life but also of contributing to the abnegation of the analysis of political and social process.

This stylistic ambivalence helps explain the reluctance of some writers and critics to give due credit to the new fiction of alienation. While some nationalist critics, including Gifford and Craig, resolve the tension by presenting the new fiction as the aesthetic overcoming of social and political failure, other commentators have been concerned that the gloomy worldview of these novels has helped sustain a representational malaise which has led to Scotland becoming imprisoned in its own negative stereotypes. A recent cultural pamphlet urges Scots to move beyond ‘miserabilism’ in literature and film: the self-fulfilling and repetitive perpetuation of archetypes of a damaged culture.<sup>13</sup> This complaint has a long pedigree. Writing in 1996, for example, Kenneth Steven saw the new wave of Scottish writing as the repetitive expression of an empty ‘malaise [...] without a cause; just a kind of bitter tiredness that will not go away’. Steven argues that this is not the renewal, but the destruction of traditional literary values: writing was now being judged on its commercial

potential, or its ability to shock, rather than for the aspiration to any kind of transcendence. Most worrying for Steven, the new styles are not so much the renewal of Scottish tradition but its abolition: for much contemporary Scottish writing ‘there is nothing beneath it. It seems to exist in a vacuum, to pay no attention to what has gone before, even in the earlier part of this century’.<sup>14</sup> If literature is taken as the guarantor of national community, the literature of alienation becomes not only a symptom of nihilism but an accelerant of cultural devastation.

The persistence of this debate suggests its significance. Underlying it are differences over the relationship between fiction and society, perhaps particularly starkly drawn as a result of what Hames has described as the ‘remarkably strong claims for the political efficacy of the contemporary literary novel’ made in Scotland in the period.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the very social processes that seem to have driven the revival of Scottish fiction have been understood in terms of the shattering of tradition. For Christopher Harvie, Scotland’s nascent nationalism coincided with ‘market and information revolutions which shattered structures and hierarchies, leaving a hyper-individuation exhausted by its technology, and overwhelmed by its data: deconstructed texts, rejected canons, literature or culture fixed in local constellations’.<sup>16</sup> Harvie catches the ambiguity arising from the celebration of innovation and the experience of the exhaustion of older models: it gives rise to a stylistic freedom apparently unregulated by tradition or precedent, in which forms of connection have to be reimagined. Finally, we might also speculate that the same ambiguity will play out in the novel’s exploration of the relationship between individual and society. For as John Brenkman has argued, the transformation of the novel in the twentieth century is best seen not as the forgetting of its traditional concerns, but their renewal:

The imperatives of realism – to illuminate individual life histories in the flow of collective histories, to represent how time and impersonal forces move through individual experience and intimate relationships, to assess the boundaries of moral action – are manifest across these writers diverse projects and varied styles. The realist imperative is ingrained in the very innovations that get labelled ‘modernist’ or ‘postmodernist’.

Brenkman suggests that in confronting the modern subject with the experience of modernisation, the novel as a form has in fact run ahead of the philosophers in dealing with reality. As a result, it proves hard to locate within critical schemata that seek to derive a critical value from the opposition between the sphere of the aesthetic and that of market capitalism, or to identify a solution to alienation in the experience of art: ‘the art of the novel is not some pure countermovement to nihilism’.<sup>17</sup> The concept of tradition is predicated on an understanding of community – of the consciousness of shared cultural characteristics which relate the members of a social group in more than merely pragmatic way. When tradition is under stress, the precarious tie between aesthetics and community may fracture in ways which expose the fragility of the claims of either as resistance to modernisation processes.

### **The Case of *The Trick is to Keep Breathing***

*The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (1989) provides an excellent case study of the tensions between alienation and community in contemporary Scottish fiction. Quickly recognised as a major achievement, the novel is both informed by and a response to the formal developments of the Scottish novel in the 1980s. Indeed the novel’s protagonist includes both Kelman and Gray in a list of her reading materials, while the book as a whole adopts the typographical



device of indicating section breaks by a series of three characters – ‘ooo’ – from Kelman’s *The Busconductor Hines* (1984) and *A Chancer* (1985). The novel’s first-person perspective and its use of typographical breakdown to indicate points of intense psychological or textual disturbance echo Gray’s *1982 Janine* (1984). Its complex exploration of narrative perspective is more evidently indebted to Kelman, although thematic concerns with guilt and responsibility connect it to both predecessors, and to what had by the end of the decade emerged as a hallmark of the new Scottish fiction. Where the book seems to break new ground is in mixing these stylistic traits with more overtly feminist thematic concerns, already given powerful articulation in Scottish poetry by Liz Lochhead, such as consumer culture, the domestic sphere, mental health and female friendship.<sup>18</sup> Galloway is not simply working within a national context. Like Kelman, she is influenced by post-war European experimental fiction, particularly in French. Moreover, there are few precedents in Scottish tradition for the disavowed lyricism in her work that results in a particularly fraught engagement with symbolism as a possible structuring device and index of psychological states.

Georg Lukàcs had foreseen the possibility of novels in which the psychology of the individual subject would become so central that

the outside world which comes into contact with such an interiority has to be completely atomised or amorphous, and in any case must be entirely devoid of meaning. It is a world entirely dominated by convention [...]; a quintessence of meaningless laws in which no relation to the soul can be found.<sup>19</sup>

Lukàcs’s description is suggestive in relation to *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* because it shows that such alienation may stem not from the depiction of reality but from an inner

tendency of the novel as a literary form: the celebration of the rich interior life of the individual risks becoming a solipsistic bracketing of the social. But as Patricia Waugh has suggested, novels in this line have become increasingly less confident of the value-laden distinction between the fullness of lyrical interiority and the conformism and convention of the social world:

[T]hroughout the twentieth century, and particularly in its later decades, writers have been driven to depict modern secular life as one of inner void or the emptied-out self. There has been a proliferation of minimalist, solipsistic interiors, and impersonalized external landscapes of commercial exchange. Often the intellectual challenge for the author or reader of such texts is to discover latently or invent performatively some morality which can connect these spheres.<sup>20</sup>

Taken together, these are helpful guides to the challenges of *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, a novel of the most profound alienation, manifest not only in psychological and social but also in artistic terms.

Waugh's comment in particular highlights two of the significant departures of the new Scottish fiction, exemplified in Galloway. Whereas earlier twentieth-century Scottish novelists had repeatedly focused on the psychological individuation of central characters – often authorial surrogates – whose flourishing depends on separation from and in some cases reconciliation with community, Galloway's novel offers us no concrete natural or social environment, but a circular entrapment in which the domestic interior reflects Joy's consciousness of isolation back at her. Dissociation is internal – 'I watch myself from the corner of the room'<sup>21</sup> – and the systematic confusion in deictic references makes it impossible to tell which self is watching, and which being observed. The description and

vocabulary is flat, unemotional and matter of fact, as throughout the novel. The result is that the few uses of metaphor stand out distinctly: ‘Streetlight gets in and makes the furniture glow at the edges, like bits of sunk ship rising out of the wash of green’.<sup>22</sup> Galloway draws a marine vocabulary from the novel’s seaboard setting – it is specifically situated around Irvine. But there is something queasy about this image, as if the light, coming not from a natural source but from the planned social environment, cannot bring the spiritual aid we expect from poetry. The liquid imagery introduced here is also recurrent through the novel, providing structure through repetition in the absence of clear narrative development. The final pages of the novel also find Joy sitting on the floor of her living room; but this time it is Christmas tree lights that effect the transformation, as she imagines swimming, breasting the ocean that in the first scene resonates only with a sense of shipwreck, sea-wrack, or even drowning. While most critics have seen the closing pages of the novel as promising steps on the path to recovery, at least as striking is the degree to which there is only continuity within this repetition, making Joy’s small positive advances seem precarious at best.

Not only are there no moments of lyrical epiphany in *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* but the novel repeatedly challenges the cultural script that connects cultivation of imagination to individual flourishing. This is signalled formally. Not only is Joy’s consciousness saturated in the language and judgements of the mass circulation magazines of which she is an apparently sceptical yet voracious reader, but the text of the novel is presented as including cuttings or quotations from these magazines. This breakdown of the boundary between literary and mass culture could be seen as a symptom of social degeneration, or of the individual failure to make significant value judgements. Yet the novel’s ambivalence seems to extend towards this distinction itself. In a list of her reading material, Joy equates literature with the miscellaneous texts of mass culture:

I read *The Prophet*, Gide, Kafka and Ivor Cutler. *Gone with the Wind*, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*, Norman MacCaig and Byron. *Lanark*, Muriel Spark, *How to cope with your Nerves/ Loneliness/ Anxiety*, Antonia White and Adrian Mole. *The Francis Gay Friendship Book* and James Kelman. ee cummings. *Unexplained Mysteries* and *Life After Death*. I read magazines, newspapers, billboards, government health warnings, advertising leaflets, saucebottles, cans of beans, Scottish Folk Tales and The Bible. They reveal glimpses of things just beyond the reach of understanding, but never the whole truth. I fall into a recurring loop every morning after<sup>23</sup>

Marking Joy as an informed reader of contemporary Scottish writing, this list also suggests her knowledge of the classics of modern literary alienation. Each item promises some kind of ethical guidance, but the list as a whole fails to establish a hierarchy between them. The ‘truths’ each type of text promises – about life on Earth or life after death, religion or mysticism, politics or friendship – all become equivalent ways of making sense of the world. This implies a cultural condition in which no set of texts has a higher degree of authority than any other, indicative perhaps that the novel is concerned with a societal crisis of significance transcending Joy’s personal crisis.

The novel is equivocal as to whether the fault lies more largely with Joy’s failure to adapt to the social world, or the social world that has failed to provide her with adequate resources to sustain her existence. While centred on Joy’s perceptions, thoughts and feelings, the disorientation of her mental world is so great as to significantly obstruct readers’ access to any external point by which to explain or understand her interior state. Indeed, for much of the novel, the narrative is so subjectively focused that changing surroundings suggest merely an indifferent interchange of equally hostile backgrounds. One plausible response to the novel is to see it as an exploration of the distinctive social situation of the West of Scotland in

the period. Galloway depicts the Bourtreehill estate (part of Irvine, last of the Scottish New Towns to be developed) as isolated and inaccessible; people keep themselves to themselves, roaming children appear threatening and hostile, racist graffiti appears every morning on an Asian shopkeeper's door, while the school is repeatedly vandalised.<sup>24</sup> But another possibility is perhaps more disturbing. As Ali Smith suggested in a perceptive early discussion, the novel 'strips back the everyday surface of life to reveal sheer chaos, to demonstrate that what we call "reality" is merely the flotsam of a deeper, darker place by far'.<sup>25</sup> Although he sees the novel as finally recuperative, Nicholas Royle also recognises in it an exploration not merely of social deprivation, but of more disturbing psychological impulses.<sup>26</sup> For Smith and Royle the novel raises the possibility that Joy's alienation is not symptomatic of social breakdown but a more radical repudiation of the sustaining myths of community in the face of daemonic psychic drives.

These alternatives are hard to reconcile, but perhaps they are also hard to distinguish. By showing us the world from within the perspective of Joy's alienated subjectivity, it becomes impossible to judge whether it is her response to the world, or the world itself, which is at fault. This is a challenge that readers of Kelman frequently face: Simon Kövesi argues that in *The Busconductor Hines* 'the hell that Hines crosses and recrosses is not Glasgow, but his own apocalyptic mind which can set the most mundane of scenes alight'.<sup>27</sup> In this case, Joy has internalised social norms but finds she cannot live by them. She judges her own actions in terms of function and efficiency: her role in the workplace 'tells me what I am'; she worries that she is a burden on the state, a cost to society.<sup>28</sup> This is not simply because of the medical attention she receives, but more broadly that she seems not to be functioning successfully in a world in which '**good** =' both '**productive/hardworking**' and '**value for money**'. This failure marks her as 'unProtestant'; an exile from both Scottish tradition and capitalist modernity.<sup>29</sup> But while the novel sketches the destructive pressure of

these norms within Joy's sense of self, it provides no basis on which to judge whether their excessive pressure and the intrusion of economic values into the individual lifeworld are failures inherent to the norms themselves, or to Joy's failure to successfully navigate them. Moreover, these kinds of judgements are precisely those that are being assumed when Joy is expected to translate the hard truth of Michael's death into a story that will allow her to overcome the fact of that loss through its successful reintegration of the events into her own self-narration.

Formally, the novel interlaces two sequences of fragments, the majority of which are set in roman type and form a chronological series, albeit extended backwards into earlier events in Joy's life through analeptic retrospection. Some sections focus on a single, relatively discrete, event; others contain a sequence of disconnected scenes, events or action whose relationship the reader has to establish. Most often this relationship is either blankly sequential – one thing happens after another, but the fact of temporal succession is not itself worth commenting on, so the reader is left to fill this in. The roman sections are interspersed with sections set in italics whose status is less clear: some seem to be memories of the events surrounding Michael's drowning, while others appear to be less solidly founded in reality. These images suggest a symbolic complement to the general sense of foreboding and imminent threat which characterises Joy's psychic life and seem to operate by a dream logic of condensation, combining elements from memory with more abstract symbols. Despite its fragmentation, however, the text invites the reader to engage with it as essentially a conventional novel, and thus to seek to reconstruct plot, character and significant patterns. The novel challenges the reader to find or impose such form. At its very beginning, initially disorienting because found on the verso rather than the recto of the first page spread, the first of the italic fragments tells us both '*I can't remember the last week with any clarity*' but also '*Now I remember everything all the time*'.<sup>30</sup> To remember everything is to fail to establish

sequential relations between different points in time, and to allow the past to overflow into the present. Taken together these comments invite the reader to seek the clarity that the novel lacks, and to restore a form of order to the sequence of impressions by imposing a degree of linearity, hence achieving a differentiation between past and present. This diagnostic reading re-establishes a more traditional relationship between plot and character: grasping the sequence of events that befall Joy can lead us to understand her own failure to do so. But this is also a redemptive reading. Seeking to restore order to what we encounter as broken, the reader becomes aligned with the normative ethical framework with which Joy is in conflict.

The italic sections become the test of this form of reading. Those which refer most directly to events in Spain can be treated as incomplete or partial memories of a specific traumatic moment which continues to disrupt Joy's psychological interiority in the later timeline followed in the roman sections. But as the novel develops, these events are also consciously recalled in the roman section, suggesting that the novel cannot be understood simply in terms of the working through of traumatic experience, or of psychic reintegration. Indeed, the more we learn about Joy's life, the more it seems that Michael's death is less the cause of her present mental disturbance, than merely the latest in a series of events to have confirmed her prior sense that she is being continually punished for some unknown transgression. The novel repeatedly troubles our desire to attribute a causal relationship between events, since to do so would be to claim an illegitimate external authority over Joy's understanding of her own experience from a vantage point unavailable to her. But there are strong hints that her problems in forming healthy relationships are rooted in an abusive childhood. Both the fact that the italic sequence initiates the novel, and the systematic confusion of deictic reference, suggest that the italic passages cannot be fully enclosed within the 'present' timeline established within the roman sections. The 'present' time of the novel cannot subsume or control its 'past'.

This leads to a series of problems caused not so much by Joy's unreliability as a witness to, or reporter of, her own experience but by the deliberate reflexivity of the novel. Looking at the phrases already quoted above, it is impossible to establish with any certainty exactly *when* the novel begins. Either the '*now*' of the second sentence is not the same now as the first or '*everything*' must mean everything except the last week. If the '*last week*' seems most likely to relate to the week in Spain whose events are – at first – only told in the italic sequence, it could equally refer to the first few weeks of the main chronological line, in which Joy repeatedly awakens with no memory of the night before, and has to leave herself reminders of medical appointments. If the italic sequence is not so much a description of a trauma to be overcome, but a preconscious condition of subjectivity, then it would also hold that the '*now*' belongs equally to the time of writing. Nor can we discount its reference to the time of reading, as the novel specifically charges the reader with moral responsibilities. If the invitation to recompose experience imposes on the reader something of the dilemma faced by the medical professionals who work with Joy, in weighing her autonomy against her illness, the construction of the novel subjects the reader to the same elisions and misdirection that characterise Joy's accounting to her doctors when she hides her starvation, her drinking or her squirrelling away of painkillers. While there are sections in which the reader can supply information that Joy may lack at a particular point in time, there are many others in which the roles are reversed, and in which it appears that she deliberately suppresses elements of her narration of events, as if choosing to temporarily withdraw from the intimate revelation of self implied by the highly personal narrative form. On the first Sunday night of the main section, for example, Joy leaves the house with a man, who has not been identified to us, and the narrative stops, resuming again the next morning.<sup>31</sup> This makes the novel a defiantly *composed* text: collaged, in part, from what seem to be contemporaneous letters, diaries and reading material. This reminds us that the fragmentary mode relates not to the novelistic



*representation* of psychological disturbance, but to deliberate choices made by Joy as herself the author of her account.

Joy's failure in relation to the paradigm of productive social participation might be taken as metonymic of the novel's resistance to being put to work in the service of politically-inflected criticism. While there has been marked disagreement over the exact terms, it has been widely assumed that through its depiction of alienation, the novel becomes the expression, or the critical diagnosis, of larger social problems. An early reviewer felt it showed 'the wounds inflicted by the damage of late-capitalist life in Scotland'.<sup>32</sup> Cairns Craig argues that the novel can be understood as a reflection of 'a society only aware of itself as an absence'.<sup>33</sup> Feminist critics in particular have argued that 'it is too easy [...] to see Joy as representative of any particular kind of Scottishness, or Scotland'; as Carole Jones suggests, Craig's assessment of the novel in terms of a 'masculinist allegory of national crisis' specifically occludes the novel's concerns with gender.<sup>34</sup> All three responses – anti-capitalist, nationalist and feminist – depend on seeing Joy as in some sense a representative of a larger identity category, whether by allegory or synecdoche, and the novel as a study of characteristic alienation, implicating larger social structures of social or political domination. But through the exploration of its protagonist's claim to autonomy, the novel dramatises its own, and in doing so poses a challenge to the legitimacy of representation in general; while its refusal of judgement demands modes of reading that suspend symptomatic interpretation.

This suspension of diagnostic reading generates part of the ambivalence of the novel's handling of the political question of community. The novel can, for example, be connected to the question of adequate housing. Its symbolic connection both to the perceived failure of municipal planning in the Labour Scotland of the 1950s and 1960s and to the Thatcherite emphasis on home ownership, had made housing by the late 1980s a critical marker in Scottish political discourse. The novel persistently stresses that the rented Housing

Authority property is cold, draughty and inadequately furnished; the walls are so thin that she can hear the family next door argue: but Joy is herself a home-owner, forced into rented accommodation by the dry rot spreading through the cottage she has bought after her break-up with Paul. The novel hints that Joy's current predicament represents the failure of her attempt to live 'independent and free', related perhaps to her effort to build a newly 'liberated' type of relationship with Michael – 'he needn't feel he owed me anything. New woman, new man. No jealousies, no possessiveness, no demands' – causing her episodes of distress for which she cannot account.<sup>35</sup> Joy seems to have been ill-served by changing cultural modes, seen as a forgetting of the priority of social relations from which springs the complex interweaving of obligation and debt that characterises moral existence. Joy's need for extreme control over her emotions – reflected in her suspicion of telephones, as well as in the distance she maintains from Ellen, David and other friends – suggests this desire for independence. But it also connects to her longing to be free from guilt, and hence her fantasy of a form of life in which she would not owe anyone anything.

Joy's sense of guilt and her desire for autonomy also dominate her interaction with the medical profession; the difficulty of evaluating the consequences further blurs the novel's relationship to social critique. Most critics have taken the presentation of these stilted conversations in a dialogue form as a sign of Joy's estrangement from social services, treating this as an indictment of bureaucratic indifference. Mary McGlynn goes so far as to suggest that Joy's interactions with the medical profession might be a 'pertinent critique' of state-funded welfare provision in general.<sup>36</sup> But there are those who criticise in order to improve such provision, and those who wish to abolish it, and the difference is significant. While their presentation as a dramatic script might suggest that her doctors merely going through the motions, it also signals Joy's need to rehearse encounters in which her sense of self-preservation and desire for control requires her to deliberately suppress information

about her anorexia. Moreover, reality can exceed her expectations: she imagines Dr Stead refusing her a referral but in fact she is on the list.<sup>37</sup> As Galloway herself has stressed, everyone in the novel is at least trying to help: ‘even [Tony]’s making an effort with her. I don’t think anybody is being lousy to Joy’.<sup>38</sup>

The apparent nihilism of *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* is most starkly illuminated in the scene in which Joy contemplates suicide. The date alone should be significant: it is her birthday, but also exactly one year to the day since Michael’s wife has discovered their affair. As elsewhere in the novel, Galloway focuses on the rituals through which Joy establishes some sense of order in her life, and she prepares her means of self-destruction with a certain degree of relish: lining up the contents of a bottle of paracetamol, filling a glass to the brim with gin. Reviewing her situation, she is led outward to explore a series of more metaphysical problems. What is the ‘point’?; Joy’s term embraces the complex interweaving of narrative, design, purpose and destiny that characterises all teleological questions. But if she has not found any reason to persist in existence, nor has she found any more persuasive reason not to do so; and when someone comes to the window, she finds herself compelled to respond: ‘If I answer I have to accept what it says about me. That I don’t want to die. That I don’t want to live very much but I don’t want to die’.<sup>39</sup>

There is a sceptical irony in the novel’s handling of Joy’s half-hearted failure to commit to either death or life, a sardonic wit matching Joy’s own. But the scene is powerful because of the contrast between Joy’s determination both to take decisive steps and to give good grounds for doing so, and her apparent inability to establish a physical connection between her reasoning and her actions. As often in the novel, she finds herself a witness to, rather than the subject of, her own volition. She is fully conscious of being lost within the circling thought patterns of the depressive, but refuses to resign herself to this, seeing the admission of sickness as abdication of responsibility. In continuing to demand of herself this

responsibility – manifest subjectively as the experience of guilt – her thoughts acquire a larger significance. ‘Knowing too much at the same time as knowing nothing at all’ signals her total awareness of her own situation, as well as her inability to establish sequence, hierarchy or dependence amongst all the things that she knows, and hence to give her experience narratable form.<sup>40</sup> Yet Joy’s choice of words also suggests that this may be not so much an individual failing as an unbearable insight (knowing too much) into the (ungrounded, unknowable) conditions of human existence. This is to experience being itself as radically in question, as a set of demands for meaning posed to us: ‘They’re always there, accusing me of having no answers yet. If there are no answers there is no point: a terror of absurdity’.<sup>41</sup> What kind of a vision of the world is this, the novel asks: blindness or insight, sickness or health?

Posing these questions, the novel follows an existentialist tradition, which finds both a precedent and an opponent in the figure of Descartes. Descartes’s arguments in his *Meditations* have long been received as an inaugural attempt to find some kind of fundamental ground for understanding human existence once we rule out God as a transcendental guarantor. But existentialism is defined by its opposition to what it takes to be the Cartesian solution, the re-foundation of certainty in the transparency of the subject as a rational and self-grounding being. Joy’s predicament expresses this ambivalent relation throughout the book – her isolation and interiority suggesting a parody of the Cartesian desire not to rely on any external basis for certainty, while continually rehearsing the limits to finding an alternative starting-point in knowledge or reasoning. Here her language – ‘**There is no point, ergo**’ – specifically invokes not merely the attempt to ground existence in logic, but the most famous phrase in Descartes.<sup>42</sup>

There is a suggestive contrast here to McIlvanney's profession of existentialist faith in *The Kiln*. Docherty invokes both Descartes and Pascal: 'Right enough, Blaise or René, whichever of you said it':

This is the most human bet that you can make. Firstly, because to be human is to admit that there is no way you can *know* that anything is there. Secondly, because if there is nothing there, it makes your moral behaviour all the more real, all the more an expression of you. It has no basis but yourself. You replace religious cynicism with human idealism. You exist dramatically in an empty universe.<sup>43</sup>

Galloway offers us the possible nightmarish consequence of accepting McIlvanney's humanist transformation of the Pascalian wager, by undercutting our reliance on the reality of the self. The universe of *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* is every bit as empty as that of *The Kiln*, with the billboards outside churches equally as meaningless – or meaningful – as the branding of a supermarket. But the flooding of Joy's consciousness by commodity culture, reiterating the message that her actions are an expression of her self, and that as a result her goodness depends on her successful performance of individuality in accordance with the expectations of the society around her, suggests less confidence that idealism can be distinguished from heteronomy and conformism. This is a perspective defined by its suspicion, in which community is the name not for the humanistic ideal, but for completed accommodation to social demands.

Joy's problem is not that she is unable to assure herself of her own existence through reason, but instead that the existence of the world provides her with no logical reasons to continue her own existence. The novel presents this as a disjunction between Joy's

knowledge that existence is absurd – cannot be justified on the basis of logic – and her refusal to simply accept this absurdity as a condition. She challenges herself on this:

[T]he defendant refuses to see the Point or to accept what must be accepted whilst being fully apprised of the facts. She knows, ladies and gentlemen, yet the knowing and the knowing making a difference to the conduct is another matter entirely.<sup>44</sup>

The issue is joining up pointlessness and the need to accept this, but Joy is unable to find a logical means to connect these two. Not only might there be no logical basis from which to argue for existence, but the demand for such a basis may be a category mistake. As she contemplates suicide, Joy crashes repetitively back into the repetition:

The logic of the thing is  
the logic of the thing is  
the logic of the thing<sup>45</sup>

Ultimately the novel suggests that this cannot be connected logically – only action, a decision in favour of continued existence, can break the repetitive cycle. So although she is dissociated from her decision – ‘my hands choose’ – Joy finds herself going to the window to meet David.<sup>46</sup> As she tells herself the next day, preparing to go to her Saturday job at the bookies: ‘the trick is not to think. Just act dammit’.<sup>47</sup>

The echo of the novel’s title links this scene to its larger concerns. Insofar as the novel can be said to hold a lesson, it is explicitly announced in the title, and repeated throughout in advice given to Joy by her friends and colleagues, by the medical profession, and in the pamphlets and magazines that she reads. Indeed, she knows it herself from the beginning – ‘it

was just a matter of getting by and letting time pass’ – but as we have seen above, the passage from knowing to being able to act on that knowledge is fraught.<sup>48</sup> Mere endurance, the brute fact of the continuation of bodily processes, the repetitive passage of the breath across the threshold of the body, is enough. For Joy, there is no coming to terms with loss, which the novel presents as a fate into which she has been born. Despite the drama of interpretation that the novel seems to offer, promising a redemptive reintegration of lost experience into the continuity of narrative structure, its more fundamental, fragmentary impulse is towards a serial and repetitive reminder of the failure of any narrative to do justice to our experience of ethical relation. Joy is horrified at the thought that she will forget Michael, but her effort to remember him is what locks her into self-destructive patterns. The novel is not structured in terms of moments of revelation or reversal, but by the filling out of the empty circle of daily existence. It shows us that ‘persistence is the only thing that works’, and that the work involved in this is hard: ‘Sometimes things get worse before they get better. Sometimes they just get worse. Sometimes all that happens is passing time’.<sup>49</sup> The deliberate banality of this lesson may suggest the novel’s concern not to be drawn into either a didactic moralism or a redemptive aestheticism. It may also underscore a wider reservation about the hierarchical attribution of a saving power to literature at the expense of mass culture. Galloway certainly shares what Michael Wood describes as an ‘interest in the life of the commonplace [...] the hunch that we find in Garcia Marquez, Carter and Ishiguro, that clichés could get us out of trouble too’.<sup>50</sup> This deflationary caution, characteristic of the novel’s concern with the difficulty of merely passing time, complements its refusal of the cultural expectation that modern literature will elevate everyday existence and found community, whose continued currency is demonstrated by the example of William McIlvanney. This challenges not only the social and economic framework of modern capitalism, but what Leo Bersani has called the ‘culture of redemption’ that comes to characterise the production and circulation of art

under these conditions, a discursive assumption that ‘fundamentally meaningless culture [...] ennobles gravely damaged experience. Or to put this in other terms, art redeems the catastrophe of history’.<sup>51</sup>

Juxtaposition of *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* with *The Kiln* suggests that the debate over the nihilistic current in contemporary Scottish fiction hangs on competing conceptions of role of the literary artwork in social and political life. Where McIlvanney professes his faith in art as an expression of the same imaginative power which can integrate merely social relations into the fuller symbolic bonds that modern tradition has attributed to community, Galloway refuses to assent to such circular recognition. Her novel challenges the explicit humanism of McIlvanney’s vision, which, despite its similar recognition of the all-too-human failures of communal life, and of the constitutive tensions between individual and social environment, continues to figure community as the reproduction of a larger communal subject through time. To see the challenges posed by the new Scottish fiction as simply nihilistic is to assume in advance that literature is given over to, and hence vitiated by, the demand for social adaptation whose violence Galloway’s novel explores so powerfully.

#### *Works Cited*

- Appadurai, Arjun, ‘The Production of Locality’, in *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 178-199
- Bell, Eleanor, *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)
- Bersani, Leo, *The Culture of Redemption* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990)
- Brenkman, John, ‘Innovation: Notes on Nihilism and the Aesthetics of the Novel’, in *The Novel, Volume 2: Forms and Themes*, ed. by Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 808-38



- Craig, Cairns, *The Modern Scottish Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)
- , ‘Devolving the Scottish Novel’, in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. by James F. English (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 121-40
- Crawford, Robert, *Scotland’s Books: The Penguin History of Scottish Literature* (London: Penguin Books, 2007)
- English, James F., ‘Introduction’, in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. by James F. English (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 1-15
- Galloway, Janice, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 2nd edn. (London: Minerva, 1991)
- Hames, Scott, ‘On Vernacular Scottishness and Its Limits: Devolution and the Spectacle of “Voice”’, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 13 (2013), 203-24
- , ‘The New Scottish Renaissance?’, in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, vol. VII: *British And Irish Fiction since 1940*, ed. by Peter Boxall and Bryan Cheyette (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 494-511
- Jaeggi, Rahel, *Alienation*, trans. by Frederick Neuhouser and Alan E. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014)
- Jones, Carole, ‘Burying the Man that was: Janice Galloway and Gender Disorientation’, in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*, ed. by Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 210-18
- Kövesi, Simon, *James Kelman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007)
- Lukács, Georg, *Theory of the Novel*, trans. by Anna Bostock (London: Merlin, 1971)
- McGlynn, Mary, “‘I Didn’t Need to Eat’: Janice Galloway’s Anorexic Text and the National Body”, *Critique*, 49 (2008), 221-36
- McIlvanney, William, *The Kiln* (London: Sceptre, 1996)
- McNeil, Kirsty, ‘Interview with James Kelman’, *Chapman*, 59 (1989) 1-9

- Metzstein, Margery, 'Of Myths and Men: Aspects of Gender in the Fiction of Janice Galloway', in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 136-46
- Murray, Isobel, Interview with Janice Galloway, in *Scottish Writers Talking 3* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), pp. 1-58
- Norquay, Glenda, 'Janice Galloway's Novels: Fraudulent Mooching', in *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*, ed. by Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 131-43
- Petrie, Duncan, *Contemporary Scottish Fictions: Film, Television and the Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004)
- Rose, Gillian, *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992)
- Royle, Nicholas, 'Manifestations of Insanity: *Hunger* and contemporary fiction', in *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 213-18
- Smith, Alison, 'Four Success Stories', *Chapman*, 74-5 (1993), 177-92
- Steven, Kenneth C., 'The Nihilism of the New', *The Herald*, 1 June 1996, p. 23
- Wallace, Gavin, 'Introduction', in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 1-7
- , 'Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity', in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 217-31
- Waugh, Patricia, *Harvest of the Sixties: English Literature and Its Background, 1960 to 1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
- Wood, Michael, *Children of Silence: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* (London: Pimlico, 1998)

Yule, Eleanor and Manderson, David, *The Glass Half Full: Moving Beyond Scottish Miserabilism* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2014)

---

Notes

<sup>1</sup> James F. English, 'Introduction', in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. by James F. English (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 1-15 (p. 4).

<sup>2</sup> Gavin Wallace, 'Introduction', in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 1-7 (p. 2).

<sup>3</sup> Douglas Gifford, cited in Scott Hames, 'The New Scottish Renaissance?', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, vol. VII: British And Irish Fiction since 1940*, ed. by Peter Boxall and Bryan Cheyette (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 494-511 (p. 495).

<sup>4</sup> Cairns Craig, 'Devolving the Scottish Novel', in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*, pp. 121-40 (p. 127).

<sup>5</sup> Kirsty McNeil, 'Interview with James Kelman', *Chapman*, 59, (1989) 1-9 (p. 9); Gavin Wallace, 'Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity', in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 217-31 (p. 217).

<sup>6</sup> William McIlvanney, *The Kiln* (London: Sceptre, 1996), p. 257.

<sup>7</sup> McIlvanney, *The Kiln*, pp. 212, 241.

<sup>8</sup> Eleanor Bell, *Questioning Scotland: Literature, Nationalism, Postmodernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 98.

<sup>9</sup> Hames, 'The New Scottish Renaissance?', p. 508.

<sup>10</sup> Rahel Jaeggi, *Alienation*, trans. by Frederick Neuhouser and Alan E. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 9.

- 
- <sup>11</sup> Arjun Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', in *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 178-199.
- <sup>12</sup> Gillian Rose, *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 297.
- <sup>13</sup> Eleanor Yule and David Manderson, *The Glass Half Full: Moving Beyond Scottish Miserabilism* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2014).
- <sup>14</sup> Kenneth C. Steven, 'The Nihilism of the New', *The Herald*, 1 June, 1996, p. 23.
- <sup>15</sup> Hames, 'The New Scottish Renaissance?', p. 494.
- <sup>16</sup> Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics from 1707 to the Present*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 212. Cited in Scott Hames, 'On Vernacular Scottishness and Its Limits: Devolution and the Spectacle of "Voice"', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 13 (2013), 203-24 (p. 213).
- <sup>17</sup> John Brenkman, 'Innovation: Notes on Nihilism and the Aesthetics of the Novel', in *The Novel, Volume 2: Forms and Themes*, ed. by Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 808-38 (pp. 810, 829).
- <sup>18</sup> This has been taken to be Galloway's significance by literary historians. For Duncan Petrie, Galloway is part of 'broadening of the cultural franchise' beyond working-class masculinity, a 'vibrant new female presence in Scottish writing', *Contemporary Scottish Fictions: Film, Television and the Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 66. For a similar assessment see Robert Crawford, *Scotland's Books: The Penguin History of Scottish Literature* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), p. 702.
- <sup>19</sup> Georg Lukàcs, *Theory of the Novel*, trans. by Anna Bostock (London: Merlin, 1971), p. 113.

- 
- <sup>20</sup> Patricia Waugh, *Harvest of the Sixties: English Literature and Its Background, 1960 to 1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 67.
- <sup>21</sup> Janice Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, 2nd edn. (London: Minerva, 1991), p. 7.
- <sup>22</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 7.
- <sup>23</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, pp. 195-96.
- <sup>24</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, pp. 13-14, 26, 133.
- <sup>25</sup> Alison Smith, 'Four Success Stories', *Chapman*, 74-5 (1993), 177-92 (p. 177).
- <sup>26</sup> Nicholas Royle, 'Manifestations of Insanity: *Hunger* and contemporary fiction', in *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 213-18.
- <sup>27</sup> Simon Kövesi, *James Kelman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 47.
- <sup>28</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 11.
- <sup>29</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 81. Emphasis in original.
- <sup>30</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 6.
- <sup>31</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 48.
- <sup>32</sup> Pat Kane, cited by Margery Metzstein, 'Of Myths and Men: Aspects of Gender in the Fiction of Janice Galloway', in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies*, pp. 136-46 (p. 139).
- <sup>33</sup> Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) p.199.
- <sup>34</sup> Glenda Norquay, 'Janice Galloway's Novels: Fraudulent Mooching', in *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*, ed. by Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 131-43 (p. 141); Carole Jones, 'Burying the Man that was: Janice Galloway and Gender Disorientation', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*, ed. by Berthold Schoene (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 210-18 (p. 214).
- <sup>35</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, pp. 192, 195.

- 
- <sup>36</sup> Mary McGlynn, “‘I Didn’t Need to Eat’: Janice Galloway’s Anorexic Text and the National Body’, *Critique*, 49 (2008), 221-36 (p. 226).
- <sup>37</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, pp. 51-53.
- <sup>38</sup> Isobel Murray, Interview with Janice Galloway, in *Scottish Writers Talking 3* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), pp. 1-58 (p. 29).
- <sup>39</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 203.
- <sup>40</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 195.
- <sup>41</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 195.
- <sup>42</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 198. Emphasis in original.
- <sup>43</sup> McIlvanney, *The Kiln*, p. 207
- <sup>44</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 200.
- <sup>45</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 200-01.
- <sup>46</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 203.
- <sup>47</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 205.
- <sup>48</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, p. 15.
- <sup>49</sup> Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, pp. 173, 216, 221.
- <sup>50</sup> Michael Wood, *Children of Silence: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* (London: Pimlico, 1998), p. 189.
- <sup>51</sup> Leo Bersani, *The Culture of Redemption* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 22.